

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 20, 1790.

wondered how any body could be foolish enough to spend hours in rattling to a woman without thinking to gain a farthing by it. They gave a long list of young men who had been frugal and industrious, till they were enticed by love to prefer pleasure to profit. They declared, that when we take an account of balls and treats, and trinkets of various kinds, with the loss of time inseparably attendant upon them, it was at the peril of a fortune to attempt the heart of a beloved object. I was a good deal amused with the manner in which they treated of love; they considered it as they would any other commodity, setting a price upon every part of it. They reckoned a sigh at a shilling, and if it chanced to be observed by the person for whom it was intended, it was well if half a guinea cleared the expence of it. A side glance was reckoned at half as much as a full view; they proportioned out all the parts of a beautiful person, and made a valuation of each of them—the same scale was applied to their very attitudes; for the sight of a beautiful woman dancing, was accounted an enormous expence, and if she chanced to smile with any degree of complacency on any one, it was well if he was not ruined; under these impressions they considered love as a certain forerunner of poverty.

There was one complaint raised against this passion, which I thought had something in it more plausible, than any I have yet mentioned; it turned upon the ease with which it makes its approaches upon us, and the impossibility of guarding against its first advances. We have been able, say they, by art, to manage the elements so as in general to prevent any dangerous overflowings of them. We brave the storm in ships, and dive into the sea in bells, but the ingenuity of man has hit upon no contrivance to save us from the influence of love. Could we call it in to amuse a leisure hour, or to relieve the languor of a few tedious moments, and then dismiss it again, it might be esteemed a blessing, in a life so barren of enjoyment. But it is an influence that is shed all around us, and pours itself upon us from every corner. It often lies hid betwixt the keys of an harpsicord, and is shaken out with a few touches of the finger. It flounces in an apron and is trailed along in a petticoat. No circumstance can preserve us from it, for it will often steal upon us when we are the least upon our guard. It hides itself in a look, and waves in ringlets of the hair. It will enter by an eye, an ear, a hand or foot.—A glance and gaze are sometimes equally fatal.

I was next presented with a scene which I thought as interesting and solemn as can enter the imagination of man. This was no other than a view of the whole train of disappointed lovers. At the sight of them my heart insensibly melted into the most tender compassion. There was an extreme dejection mingled with a piercing wildness in their looks, that was very affecting. Cheerfulness and serenity, I could easily perceive they had been long strangers to. Their countenances were overpread with a gloom, which appeared to be of long standing, and to be collected there, from dark and dismal imaginations. There was at the same time, all that kind of animation in their features, which betokens troubled thoughts. Their air and manner was altogether singular, and such as marks a spirit at once eager and irresolute. Their step was irregular, and they ever and anon started and looked around them, as tho they were alarmed by some secret terror. I was somewhat surpris'd in looking through the whole assembly, not to see any one that wept. When they had arrived at the place where they had determined to present their united petitions, I was particularly attentive to observe every thing that passed. Tho I listened I could not learn any thing distinctly. After an interval of profound silence, a murmur only of broken sighs and piercing exclamations, was heard through the assembly. I should have mentioned that some of them fell off before they had got to the place of rendezvous. They halted for some time, and continued in a melancholy suspense, whether they should turn back or go forward. They knew not which to prefer; the tranquility of indifference or the tender distresses of love; at length they inclined to the latter, not having resolution even to wish for the extinction of a passion which mingled itself with the very elements of their existence. Why, said they, should we banish from our minds, the image of all that is pleasing and delightful, and which if we should once forget, there would be nothing left in the world worth remembering? The agitation and anxiety felt upon this occasion could I lay it fully open to the reader, would form a more interesting picture than the deliberations of Cæsar whether he should pass the Rubicon.

I imagined there were several other distinct bodies of men who complained to the heavenly powers of the tyranny of love, but the particulars having in a great measure faded from my memory, the reader must excuse my passing them over in silence. I must not however forget to observe that the number and unanimity of those who presented their petitions upon this occasion, were such, that they might fairly be considered as representing the sentiments of far the greatest part of mankind. (To be concluded in our next.)

ON motion of Mr. Sturges, the petition of Jeremiah Ryan was referred to the Secretary at War.

A petition from Cornelius Hoffman, in behalf of sundry inhabitants of West Chester county, State of New-York, praying compensation for property taken by the American army, was read, and laid on the table.

Mr. Wadsworth moved that sundry petitions from invalid officers and soldiers which were read yesterday and laid on the table, should be referred to the Secretary at War—which motion was adopted.

The report of the committee on the petition of Hannibal William Dobbyn, was taken up.

Mr. Scot, one of the committee on this petition informed the House, that on enquiry of the gentleman petitioning, it appeared that he was solicitous to purchase a larger tract of land than is at present convenient to him to pay for: He proposes to pay one third of the money down.—Mr. Scot therefore moved that the following addition be made to the report, That one third be paid down, one third at the end of seven years, and the other third at the end of twelve years, with interest at six per cent. on the two thirds unpaid, from the time of closing the contract.

The immediate adoption of this motion was objected to by Mr. Smith, (S. C.) as the terms of naturalization and citizenship are not yet determined on, and aliens cannot hold real property but as trustees, and it may be doubted how far natives of foreign countries may be able to comply with such laws as may be enacted—at least it will be prudent not to precipitate the business, but to wait till the plan of uniform naturalization is reported. He therefore proposed, that the consideration of the report should be postponed.

It was observed, in answer to these objections, that it is of importance that the proposals of foreigners for the purchase of the unappropriated lands, should be attended to with promptitude—that they should meet with as little difficulty as possible, especially in the first applications, lest they should be discouraged: With respect to the terms of naturalization, the difficulty might be easily surmounted by selling the lands upon condition of a compliance with the laws of the United States in that case.

Mr. Boudinot objected to the motion for an addition to the report: He observed, that desultory, partial sales of the Western Territory, would be attended with great loss to the United States: He preferred the adoption of a system for the sale of those lands, previous to any partial sale: There have been large sales made—there are existing contracts, which are not completed: It therefore appears that the House cannot proceed understandingly in the business, with the information on the subject now in their possession: If proper methods are adopted, the unappropriated lands may be rendered a source of wealth to the Union. Under proper regulations, (said he,) I should be fully in sentiment with gentlemen who are in favor of the motion; but at present I should prefer a suspension of the business—and therefore would move that the report of the committee be referred to the Secretary of the Treasury.

The motion, with the following addition, was seconded by Mr. Sedgwick, viz. To report a uniform system for the sale of the Western Territory of the United States.

Mr. Sherman, in favor of the motion, observed, that the Western Territory, if properly disposed of, would prove of very great importance to the United States—but if sold indiscriminately to adventurers and speculators, the United States might get an accession of inhabitants whose principles may be opposed to our republican government, and we shall never realize the value of the lands, or those advantages which are expected to be derived from that source: He then pointed out the necessity of adopting a previous system, of dividing the Territory into townships, counties and states—and of making proper reservations for public uses, and selling in such lots as would tend to enhance the value of the residue.

Some gentlemen objected to the motion in this form: It was proposed that the report should lay on the table—and that the Secretary should be directed to prepare a uniform system for the sale of the Western Territory of the United States.

It was said, that the motion as it now stood, if adopted, would dispose of the report of the committee in such manner, as appeared to preclude the petition, on which the report is founded.

Mr. Baldwin said, That in his opinion the House of Representatives is not a proper body to arrange this business. The executive officers of government, in whose possession are the documents of information, are the most competent to form the necessary systems: Nor is this a novel mode of doing business of this nature: It is consonant to the practice of Congress under the late Confederation: He then read several resolves from their journals, by which the late Board of Treasury were empowered to contract with purchasers—

and in cases where credit was given, the purchaser received a certificate of his being entitled to the lands—but not a deed: In respect to credit, it had been customary, and one resolve specified seven different payments in a purchase. He was therefore in favor of referring the business to the Secretary of the Treasury, that he might report a uniform system for the sale of those lands; but to refer the report of a committee of the House to any executive officer, appeared to him informal.

The motion for referring the report to the Secretary being put, was negatived.

It was then moved that the report should lie on the table, and the Secretary be directed to report a plan as above.

This motion, Mr. White observed, must be considered as a negative to the application now before the house—and would prove a discouragement to future applicants, and prevent emigrations to this country: In respect to which, said he, I do not entertain any apprehensions of danger from the principles of those who may wish to settle among us. The present application, if attended to, may be productive of others, as it will of very great advantage to the United States, and need not preclude the adoption of a uniform system, by which in future, applications to Congress will be rendered unnecessary.

Mr. Sedgwick said, that whatever might have been his own private opinion, he should now, from experience, be for shutting the door against all particular applications. It will be impossible to attend to the numerous instances that may be expected to follow, if the petitions of individuals are to employ the time of the legislature. There can not any great inconveniences result from a little delay. He was therefore for digesting a regular system, and not for determining in any particular case until that was done.

A division of the motion was called for, and the question, Shall the report lie on the table? was determined in the affirmative.

The second part of the motion for referring the subject of a uniform plan to the Secretary of the Treasury being put, was adopted.

The report of the Secretary of the Department of War, on the petition of Charles Marckly, was read a second time, and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Sherman moved that a state of facts respecting the Western Territory, as reported by a Committee to this House the last session, be referred to the Secretary of the Treasury for his information.

Mr. Wadsworth of the committee on that part of the President's Speech respecting the South-Western Frontiers, and Indian Affairs, informed the House that the committee is ready to report. This report, relating to business of a confidential nature, the doors of the gallery were shut. After a short interval the galleries were again opened.

A message was received from the Senate, informing the House, that they had appointed Mr. Maclay, Mr. Ellsworth, and Mr. Henry, to confer with a committee of the House, upon the question whether or not the unfinished business of the last session shall be taken up in the present, in the same manner as if no adjournment had taken place.

A concurrence with the Senate and the appointment of a committee on the part of the House was moved: This motion was objected to, and the recent instance of the appointment of a committee, *de novo*, on a business which was left unfinished the last session, was urged as declaring the sense of the house respecting the unfinished business—the sense of the house being thus declared, there is no propriety in appointing a committee of conference, when there does not appear to be any subject of disagreement; on the contrary it rather is probable, that there is a majority of the Senate in favor of the practice which the House has adopted.

In support of the motion it was said, that the appointing of a committee of conference did not necessarily infer the existence of any subject of disagreement: That except the two Houses should act jointly and upon similar rules, it is difficult to conceive how the public business could proceed. Several instances were cited of the embarrassments which would arise from one House taking up the unfinished business in the State it was left, and the other originating the same business *de novo*.

The motion was adopted, and a committee of five members appointed, viz. Mr. Sherman, Mr. Thatcher, Mr. Hartley, Mr. White, and Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Lee then moved, that the committee be instructed by the House to inform the committee of the Senate, that this House had already decided in favor of taking up the unfinished business of the last session *de novo*.

Mr. White observed, that instructions would be unnecessary, as the Senate must have known already of this decision.

Mr. Livermore was against instructing the committee: We are not informed that the Senate have instructed their committee, said he: If the committees are restricted, perhaps they will not meet upon equal ground. The business of committees is to investigate, and therefore they should not be restricted.—The House adjourned, without a decision on Mr. Lee's motion.